

Shuras in Iran; hostages likely topic

NIKOSIA (AP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Shuras, who said last month he would visit Iran for its help in freeing Western hostages in Lebanon, arrived in Tehran Sunday. The official Islamic Republic News Agency reported that Shuras was welcomed at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati as he began his two-day trip. Velayati referred to the "important strategic ties" between the two countries and said Shuras's visit would contribute to increasing those ties, the agency reported. The agency said officials of the two countries frequently discuss Lebanon, Palestine, the Middle East and the Muslim World. It did not mention specifically the issue of the hostages. Last month Shuras told Peggy Say, sister of American hostage Terry Anderson, that he would raise the issue of Iranian help to free the 18 Westerners held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian groups. He said it would "work intensively with Iranian leaders" for the hostages' release and would bring up the subject during his trip to Tehran.

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Nathan to seek Yemeni emigration

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli pacifist Abbie Nathan said Sunday he planned to visit South Yemen this week to work for Yemeni Jews to be allowed to emigrate. Nathan, who served a four-month jail term in Israel for meeting Yasser Arafat told Israel Radio the Palestine leader had agreed to help him gain permission to enter South Yemen. Between 3,000 and 4,000 Jews live in South Yemen, according to Jewish Agency estimates.

Assad gets Soviet message

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said Sunday it had received a message from the Soviet Union. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said the message from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, dealing with developments in the Soviet Union and bilateral cooperation, was handed to President Hafez Al Assad Saturday by Soviet Ambassador Alexander Zotov.

Shevardnadze visits Africa

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze left Sunday for a seven-nation tour of Africa after declaring that all aspects of Moscow's cooperation with the Third World were under review. The highlight of his nine-day trip is his visit to Namibia Wednesday, where he will attend independence celebrations and meet U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. On the eve of his departure for Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Nigeria, Shevardnadze told the Soviet news agency Novosti that "the future lies with new progressive forms of cooperation."

New Delhi survives crisis

NEW DELHI (R) — India's minority National Front government survived its first major internal crisis on Sunday when Deputy Prime Minister Dev Lal withdrew his two-day-old resignation. Chimanbhai Patel, spokesman for the front alliance, said Lal agreed to remain in the government after receiving a letter from Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh. Singh's four-month-old government needs support from both left-wing parties and right-wing Hindu revivalists and there had been speculation that some other members of parliament might also desert it.

Arafat pledges to defend Libya

ROME (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat pledged Sunday to defend Libya "with our blood" from U.S. threats, state-run Libyan radio reported. The radio, in a report monitored in Rome and London, said Arafat spoke Sunday after a meeting with Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

Latvia, Estonia elect legislators

MOSCOW (AP) — Voters in five Soviet republics elected local legislators Sunday, with crucial runoff in the Slavic heartland and pro-independence candidates in Latvia and Estonia hoping to prevail as in neighbouring Lithuania. The elections in Latvia and Estonia are the first multiparty balloting for the parliaments of the two Baltic republics. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) and were closing at 8 p.m. (1700 GMT). Results were not expected until Monday or later.

Iran's judge says Rushdie decree stands

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's top judge repeated Sunday that the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's order to kill British author Salman Rushdie had to be carried out. "The verdict issued by his ensemble the leader must be implemented and cannot be revised," Mohammad Ali Yazdi told a news conference reported by Tehran Radio.

After lengthy debate, deputies vote for closed session Tuesday

House votes to debate corruption in 'secret'

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After a lengthy debate Sunday, the Lower House of Parliament voted in favour of convening a closed session to discuss the outcome of the Finance Committee's preliminary investigations into the Kingdom's debt problem and financial and administrative corruption.

Out of the 63 deputies present, 44 voted in favour of a closed session, to be convened Tuesday as proposed by 12 deputies who are members of the Finance Committee.

The committee's chairman, Abdallah Ensour, argued strongly in favour of keeping the session closed so as to avoid "labeling" people and obstructing the due process of the law.

Ensour, a former member of the Rifai cabinet, said keeping the session closed was "necessary to protect people's honour and to avoid sensationalism that could be harmful for and detrimental to the investigation."

He added that Parliament "is not the judiciary and does not issue rulings. We have some facts with details and some with no details... we must start somewhere and we are starting with

our preliminary report which will be followed by other reports on corruption and parties responsible for the debt."

The former planning minister said that if Tuesday's session were to be open, the committee would not be able to present all the facts to deputies and would be depriving the discussion from instrumental information.

Justice Minister Yousef Mbaideen, who is also a deputy from Karak, said the session must be closed "because it is in the interest of the investigation to keep things under a lid until cases are ruled upon by the judiciary."

Deputy Thounay Hindawi (Irbid) made a strong case against the closed session. He said that after studying interpretations of the article in the Constitution, which allows the holding of such sessions, "it was revealed to me that the House can resort to closed sessions as an exception, only if there was a conviction that making the session public would harm national security or cause military, political, social or economic damage."

Hindawi asserted that "it is clear that discussing the debt, corruption and economic crimes does not fall under these headings."

He argued that as deputies, "we won't be in the elections because we promised people in our election programmes to reveal all the facts... the people are still suffering, and if we resort to secrecy in this matter, we would be depriving the people of their right to know the truth as of the session to discuss the report."

During the vote count it was noticed that all deputies in the Cabinet, most lawmakers and members of the Finance Committee voted in favour of a closed session.

Palestinian dies amid Hamas strike against Baker proposal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian man died in a West Bank hospital Sunday, three days after he was hit in the head by a rubber bullet fired by Israeli soldiers subduing stone-throwers, hospital reports said.

Also Sunday, shops and schools in the occupied West Bank and Arab Jerusalem were closed by a general strike called by the fundamentalist Islamic Hamas movement.

The strike was to protest a plan by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to hold preliminary Israeli-Palestinian talks. A recent Hamas leaflet said Baker's proposal was "an American-Zionist conspiracy."

Meanwhile, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel announced it asked the army for an independent review of a raid last December in which soldiers killed two Palestinians and wounded three others while trying to arrest an Arab suspect.

The man who died Sunday was identified as Salim Ya'acob Rihan, 50. Reports said he was shot Thursday night as he drove a horse-drawn cart through the Al Amari refugee camp.

A doctor at Ramallah hospital said Rihan was hit in the head with a single rubber bullet "fired at close range."

Rihan's death raised to 664 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers or civilians since the uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip began in December 1987.

Reports said Mazen Al Bishawi, 28, was shot four times in his clothing shop in the Nablus central market by a masked man. Bishawi was suspected of dealing in drugs and prostitution, the reports said.

Meanwhile, reports said that Yassir Salama, who was reportedly killed last Wednesday in Gaza's Khan Yunis refugee camp as a

suspected collaborator, had escaped her Palestinian attackers and returned home Friday with serious injuries.

In the Gaza Strip Sunday, an 18-year-old Palestinian was in critical condition after he was hit in the head by a plastic bullet in a stone-throwing confrontation with soldiers in Gaza City, hospital officials said.

The youth, a resident of the Jahaliya refugee camp, was evacuated to hospital for further treatment, they said.

The Israeli Civil Rights group's petition was filed with Amman Strasnow, the army advocate general.

Israeli soldiers raided the home of the Alawneh family in the West Bank village of Jabe last Dec. 22 to arrest a son, Mohammad Alawneh, 22. At the time, the army said it opened fire after encountering resistance to the raid.

The minister, who complained that he was not given the chance to address the Finance Committee and make his point, said Jordan had one of the lowest income tax levels in the region. He explained that revenues from income tax constituted only 2.9 per cent of Jordan's gross national product compared with 4.5 per cent in Cyprus, seven per cent in Syria, 5.7 per cent in Egypt, 4.4 per cent in Morocco and 4.3 per cent in Tunisia.

Instead, he added, Jordan depends on customs fees to compensate, with revenues from customs reaching 52 per cent of total taxation compared with 24 per cent in Cyprus, 30 per cent in Egypt, 17 per cent in Greece, 13 per cent in Syria, 34 per cent in Tunisia and 22 per cent in Morocco.

He told the House that the committee's amendment, expanding exemptions from income tax, "will lead to a bigger deficit, and force measures by the government to increase revenues in a way that damages the national economy and hurts people you are seeking to protect."

"I am the finance minister, and I was not given the chance to express my views to the committee when I asked the committee's chairman," Jardaneh said. "We must discuss alternatives in detail and allow for a better discussion before endorsing laws."

Ensour, who at first failed to acknowledge the need for resumption of discussions on the subject, said the committee met with officials from the Ministry of Finance in the course of its deliberations.

"I assumed that the ministry staff had informed the minister of our amendment," Ensour said. "I regret that this has happened."

Ensour said he did not believe there would be a JD 20 million increase in the budget deficit.

Jardaneh responded promptly: "I am the finance minister and I say I am

(Continued on page 5)

Carter: Syria ready for direct talks with Israel under international aegis

By Mariam Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter left Jordan Sunday after a three-day visit and arrived in Israel saying that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had authorised him to say that Syria was ready for direct Syrian-Israeli talks under the umbrella of an international peace conference.

Carter, who brokered the 1978 Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, said that President Assad was willing to negotiate on the status of the Golan Heights within the same framework.

The government-owned Al Bayan daily in Dubai said Sunday Syria expressed willingness to demilitarise the Golan Heights if Israel agreed to withdraw its troops from the strategic area, which was occupied in the 1967 war and unilaterally annexed by the Jewish state in 1981. An agreement worked out under the aegis of the United Nations in 1974 provided for a demilitarised zone surrounded by zones of reduced forces on both sides.

Deputy Saad Haddadin, Fares Nabilah, Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi, Faisal Ben Jaci and Hussein Mjalli demanded that the committee provide them with copies of its report before voting on Tuesday's session. But deputies Theeb Marji, Abdul Haif Alawi and Yousef Al Athem said there was no harm in having one closed session then opening the rest of the sessions to discuss the report.

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"There is no way to proceed in any substantive way toward peace without Jordan being deeply and intimately involved," Carter said. He added that His Majesty King Hussein had "obviously expressed his support" for the "next step," which, according to the ex-president, is an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue as proposed by Egypt and endorsed by Washington.

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Paying one's own way

FORMER U.S. President Jimmy Carter said Sunday that he was paying his way to Israel and the occupied territories because Israeli government offers of support with a condition that it would decide which Palestinians from the occupied territories he would meet.

The Israelis told him that "unless the Israeli government could choose which Palestinians I will meet with, they would not support my position. So, I sent word to the Israelis I prefer to pay my own way for the entire trip," Carter told a press conference in Amman.

In statements made in occupied Jerusalem after meeting Israeli President Chaim Herzog, Carter denied that he was carrying a message from Assad to Israeli leaders. Israeli Labour Party leader and sacked Vice-Premier Shimon Peres told the Israeli parliament last week that he had "received information that the Syrians are proposing peace negotiations, demilitarising the Golan Heights."

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All hostages could be freed by January 1991, Iranian aide says

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior Iranian official said in an interview published Sunday the Western hostages in Lebanon could be freed within 10 months.

Ali Mohammad Besbarati, first deputy foreign minister, told the Tehran Times newspaper, "I can say that all the hostages may be released by next January."

Besbarati's statement is the latest in a series about the hostages from ranking officials and the government-run media in Tehran.

A moderate faction led by President Hashemi Rafsanjani says the hostage issue is moving toward a solution, while a radical faction argues against releasing them.

The 18 Western hostages are believed held by Shiite Muslim groups loyal to Iran, but thought to be more loyal to the radicals than the moderates. The hostages include eight Americans, four Britons, two West Germans, two Swiss, an Irishman and an Italian.

Besbarati, who visited Lebanon recently, said he believes chances for a hostage release are better than ever.

Israel said

"I saw the situation there," the newspaper quoted him as saying. "And you know nothing is secret in Lebanon. On the basis of my observations I can say the chances for freedom for the hostages are brighter than at any time before."

The official said he did not expect all the hostages to be released at one time.

He also said Iran has no direct link to the kidnappers.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as it has been repeatedly said, is against the philosophy of hostage-taking and Tehran has no direct or indirect role in this matter," Besbarati said.

"Many countries believe that we in Iran have spiritual influence in Lebanon," he said. "They also believe that we can use the spiritual influence for freedom of the hostages."

An advance copy of the interview with the English-language daily in Tehran was sent to the Associated Press. The same paper in two recent editorials called for releasing the hostages as an Islamic and humanitarian action.

Besbarati said Israeli attacks on Lebanon had twice prevented hostage releases — one was an unspecified attack on Muslim positions in South Lebanon two years ago and the second was the July 28, 1989, kidnapping of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid.

"I think if these two incidents had not taken place, by now the hostages would have reached their homes," the Foreign Ministry official said.

A spiritual leader of Hezbollah, or Party of God, Obeid was kidnapped from his home in South Lebanon and remains imprisoned in Israel. The United States, Britain and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar all condemned the Israeli action.

Kidnappers holding U.S. Marine Col. William Higgins, taken hostage while serving with the United Nations in South Lebanon said they hanged him in retaliation last July 31. No body was ever recovered.

Last week, kidnappers holding

three U.S. educators hostage threatened to kill them unless unspecified demands were met. The kidnappers also denounced statements by Iranian officials calling for the hostages' release on humanitarian grounds.

The radical faction in Tehran, eager to confront Rafsanjani, have encouraged the Lebanese groups to continue holding the hostages and said that Iran should stay out of the matter.

Rafsanjani has expressed support for releasing the hostages several times in the past, and the Tehran Times newspaper usually reflects his views.

The moderate faction has sought improved ties with the West to help finance Iran's reconstruction in the wake of 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. But the radicals consider ties with the West a betrayal of the ideals of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Friday was the fifth anniversary of U.S. hostage Terry Anderson's captivity. Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, is the longest held Western hostage, although most others have been held at least three years.

In an annual report of possible arms sales for fiscal year 1990, the State Department informed Congress, that Israel may buy the Patriot. Under-Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz discussed details of the sale on a visit to Israel in January.

Defense secretary Dick Cheney told young American Jewish leaders several days ago that discussions about the Patriot sale were under way.

But sources close to the deal say Israel is far from sold. "There's still a long way to go

toward a possible purchase — I say possible and not necessarily probable," said one source who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said a decision was not expected for several months.

In Israel last week, a military official said the Patriot "only gives limited solution to the missile problem, so we don't intend to buy it at this stage."

"We are looking at other systems," the official said, while declining to elaborate.

Israel's dilemma is the cost versus the threat. For the \$200 million the United States is asking for two Patriot systems Israel would need to could produce the next generation of an anti-missile missile, known as the Arrow.

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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwaitis forecast return of parliament this year

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti officials said Sunday that elections bringing the return of parliament after a 3½-year suspension could be held this year.

For the first time since a coalition of 32 former deputies staged a series of rallies in December and January demanding that parliament be reconvened, officials are putting a timeframe to possible elections.

"A parliament is not very far away; a call for elections could be made later this year," a senior official told Reuters.

The big unanswered question now is what sort of parliament will return to the old National Assembly building, scene of unusually lively debates in the Gulf state.

Most of the activists want what they term a democratic parliament restored.

"A toothless parliament is not acceptable. The issue here is will the government respect the constitution?" said one activist.

But many Kuwaitis and former deputies agree that rowdy public debates in the past sowed division among the country's different tribes, ethnic groups and religious factions.

The Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah dissolved the parliament — 50 elected members, 15 appointed cabinet ministers and a prime minister — at the height of the Iran-Iraq war. The conflict had spilled over into the northern Gulf states with missiles hitting its ships and several bomb attacks in the capital.

Some of those seeking what they see as a democratic forum say they fear the government will try to change election laws, amend the constitution or impose restrictions to guarantee what one activist called the formation of a "tame parliament."

When Iraq executed that spy (Bazoft), it did so according to its laws... it was not appropriate for Iraq to face this unfair media campaign," Bahrain's Prime Minister Sheikha Khalifa Ben Suliman Al Khalifa was quoted as saying.

The government newspaper Izvestia said its journalists could not attempt to judge whether Bazoft was guilty of spying. "But we are firmly convinced that a sentence of death on a journalist is a measure that is totally unacceptable in the civilized world."

But Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdulla Al Sabah said last week he favoured an elected assembly "that not only acts as watchdog, but to which (the government) will be accountable as well."

Since late January, the crown prince has been meeting former deputies, tribal chiefs and prominent citizens to hear their views.

Former deputies said he had not yet put forward a formula for what the government calls "popular participation" in running the state.

"Parliamentary life will return but will it be like it is like the old parliament? We have to consider the state's security, interests and the effects of a parliament and public debate on our neighbours and allies," one well-placed source said.

Western diplomats here also say they believe Kuwait is moving towards a more democratic system but is considering measures which could limit parliamentary powers.

"They will have elections and a parliament but under supervision, it will not be the same kind of democracy we know (in the West)," said one diplomat.

Sheikh Saad told a local daily an elected assembly could be formed but "according to (new) basis and regulations... (to ensure) the non-repetition of the experiences of 1976 and 1986" when parliaments were dissolved.

Najibullah moves to shore up shaky political position

KABUL (R) — Afghan President Najibullah Sunday was scrambling to shore up his political position badly shaken by the March 6 coup attempt in Kabul spearheaded by rebel air force pilots.

In a blunt televised address to Mujahideen field commanders this week, Najibullah tried to paint his implacable foe, hardline guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, as their worst enemy.

He said coup leader Shahnawaz Tanzi, his now sacked defense minister who was last seen by reporters in a cave hideout in Logar province about 50 kilometres south of the capital, had joined forces with Hekmatyar.

"Gulbuddin and his treacherous group intend to weaken other opposition grouping and make himself champion of the race," the official Bakhtar news agency quoted Najibullah as saying.

"With my Islamic and Afghan voice I say loudly, 'resist with all your might against them. Topple the national traitors and killer of your sons,'" he said in the appeal to guerrillas who are nominally allied with Hekmatyar in the Pakistan-based Afghan opposition.

Tanai has failed to win support from the other six guerrilla groups based in Pakistan.

Najibullah, attempting to exploit, tribal and political differ-

ences plaguing the opposition Islamic rebels, said in his speech that men of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami had attacked and killed other Mujahideen recently in six Afghan provinces.

The Mujahideen appear to have made significant gains in the battle for Khost, a small garrison town about 160 kilometres southeast of Kabul and commanding one of the roads leading to the Afghan capital.

Mujahideen forces captured the village of Tanai and two other security posts in Khost district which the guerrillas have been trying to seize for months, Bakhtar news agency reported at the weekend.

The village of Tanai is also the family home of the coup leader.

Government troops repulsed a heavy attack on Jalalabad this week, the news agency said. Mujahideen have been trying to take the city east of Kabul for over a year and make it the capital of their interim government.

The March 6 coup coincided with the first anniversary of the battle for Jalalabad, which launched the Mujahideen offensive to step aside on Najibullah following the Soviet troops withdrawal.

The Kabul Valley has re-verberated to the firing of Soviet-made Scud missile and to warplanes heading east and south to the battlefields in Khost and Jalalabad over the past several

days.

The government Saturday said trials would begin soon for those arrested in the "Shahnavaz-Gulbuddin coup plot." Diplomats in Kabul estimate about 100 people have been arrested so far.

Najibullah has promoted 52 officers to the rank of general since the coup in an effort to create a military leadership he can trust.

The government Saturday released an official report on loss of life and property in the outset, which said 95 people were killed and 172 were injured mostly in an aerial bombardment of the presidential palace and other parts of the capital by rebel warplanes and in exchanges of fire between rival tanks in the streets.

The report said 230 shops and 55 homes were destroyed and hundreds of other buildings damaged.

Diplomats said Najibullah may come under renewed pressure to step aside as a gesture of national reconciliation.

Some diplomats do not rule out the possibility that Moscow may end its support for Najibullah's government in a deal with the United States to end the 11-year-old Afghan civil war.

Najibullah, whose name means "noble man of God" took power in a Soviet-engineered move that forces his predecessor Babrak Karmal into exile.

Bahrain defends Iraq over execution of journalist

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Bahrain voiced its support for Iraq's execution of British-based journalist Farzad Bazoft and accused the West of interfering in Iraq's affairs, a Kuwaiti daily reported Sunday.

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Sheikh Saad told a local daily an elected assembly could be formed but "according to (new) basis and regulations... (to ensure) the non-repetition of the experiences of 1976 and 1986" when parliaments were dissolved.

A Soviet television commentator said Saturday that the execution went against the norms of behaviour in the civilised world.

The remarks of Yevgeny Kiselev came in the main evening television news bulletin after it showed huge crowds protesting outside the British embassy in Baghdad over Britain's condemnation of the execution.

The government newspaper Izvestia said its journalists could not attempt to judge whether Bazoft was guilty of spying.

"But we are firmly convinced that a sentence of death on a journalist is a measure that is totally unacceptable in the civilized world."

But Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdulla Al Sabah said last week he favoured an elected assembly "that not only acts as watchdog, but to which (the government) will be accountable as well."

Since late January, the crown prince has been meeting former deputies, tribal chiefs and prominent citizens to hear their views.

Former deputies said he had not yet put forward a formula for what the government calls "popular participation" in running the state.

"Parliamentary life will return but will it be like it is like the old parliament? We have to consider the state's security, interests and the effects of a parliament and public debate on our neighbours and allies," one well-placed source said.

Western diplomats here also say they believe Kuwait is moving towards a more democratic system but is considering measures which could limit parliamentary powers.

"They will have elections and a parliament but under supervision, it will not be the same kind of democracy we know (in the West)," said one diplomat.

Sheikh Saad told a local daily an elected assembly could be formed but "according to (new) basis and regulations... (to ensure) the non-repetition of the experiences of 1976 and 1986" when parliaments were dissolved.

had confirmed he was not a spy.

"Highly placed government sources, who have made exhaustive checks with international intelligence agencies, last night categorically confirmed that Observer journalist Farzad Bazoft was not a spy," the Observer said in a front-page report.

An Iraqi revolutionary court found Bazoft guilty of spying, a charge he denied to a British embassy official shortly before his execution.

Iraq distributed copies of Bazoft's confession in which he admitted spying for Britain and Israel.

A British nurse, who drove Bazoft to a secret Iraqi military base where he wanted check reports that a massive explosion had killed up to 700 people, was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

British officials have denied Bazoft was a spy but have confirmed that he offered police information unrelated to Iraq, and that he served a year in prison in 1981 for robbery.

The Observer said the intelligence services of Israel, the United States and West Germany were contacted by Britain immediately Bazoft was accused of spying.

The paper said: "It was learned that the U.S. and Israel had already made their own exhaustive inquiries and discounted any link."

Conservative Party lawmaker Rupert Allason, who writes on espionage, said Friday that it was "highly likely" Bazoft was a spy for Israel, but "highly unlikely" he was working for British intelligence, in view of his criminal record.

Iran frees convicts to mark new year

NICOSIA (R) — Iran has pardoned or commuted sentences on 119 convicts tried by revolutionary courts in four cities, the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) said Sunday. IRNA, monitored in Cyprus, said supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the pardons to mark the Iranian new year which starts on March 21. The convicts had been tried by courts in Tehran, Isfahan, Bandar Abbas and Gorgan, the agency said, adding that Khamenei acted at the request of top judge Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi. IRNA gave no breakdown on how many had been pardoned or had their sentences reduced.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran

Authorities move to address problems of refugee camps

ZARQA (J.T.) — The government will undertake a long-term development programme to improve conditions for refugee camp residents in cooperation with several government departments and concerned institutions.

This was announced Sunday by Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, at a meeting here following an extensive inspection tour of three Palestinian refugee camps in Zarqa governorate.

Qatanani and a number of officials and representatives of the camps drew up a plan which will be submitted to the concerned authorities.

The tour was prompted by last week's report by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, about the miserable conditions in the Sukneeh refugee camp. Camp residents complained about lack of basic services. Camp residents said they needed water and postal services, road networks and health centres as well as care for many handicapped children in the



Makeshift shelters, muddy streets, and unsanitary environment are only part of the problems plaguing some of the refugee camps in Jordan, not to mention the lack of some of the basic services (Petra photo)

terms of streets and housing units, a project for which political decisions are required," he added.

Qatanani said that the refugee camps could not be transformed into permanent residence for the Palestinians, and can only serve as a shelter, otherwise the "refugee character" of the camps

will be removed, he said. The status of refugee camps has been decided upon by the Arab World as a whole and through a unified resolution, Qatanani added.

"Our department will embark on measures designed to improve conditions like asphalt roads, removing old posts and wires

which constitute danger to the residents and their homes," Qatanani said.

Qatanani called on the local residents to cooperate with the Water Authority which has expressed readiness to link each home with the sewerage system for a JD 60 fee to be paid in three instalments.

Police report series of drug busts, arrests

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday announced the interception and seizure of 1,089 kilogrammes of hashish, 737 grammes of heroin, 1,329 grammes of opium and 270 capsules.

The PSD's anti-narcotics department director, Brigadier Ghaleb Al Zoubi, said 72 persons, including two women, mostly of non-Jordanian nationalities were arrested. They were involved either in using the drugs themselves, carrying the drugs to others, smuggling the drugs across the border and the desert regions or hiding the stuff.

The seizures and arrests were made between November 1989 and March 10, and all those arrested have either received prison terms or awaiting trial, Zoubi reported.

In one of the cases, 272.5 kilogrammes of hashish were found loaded on donkeys and mules near Sabha within Mafrad Governorate but the traffickers fled when they were spotted by the security forces, Zoubi explained.

He said three non-Jordanian nationals were seized in November trying to smuggle 31 kilogrammes of hashish destined for Jordan; and the authorities seized 203 grammes of hashish at the port of Aqaba but no arrests were made for lack of evidence.

Towards the end of November police arrested six non-Jordanians carrying 127 grammes of hashish, apparently for their own use, and on Dec. 3 for Jordanians were caught carrying 288 grammes of hashish, Zoubi revealed.

In January of this year, he said police were tipped about a cache of hashish near the desert region of Azraq and nearly 1,900 grammes of hashish were found hidden in a hole dug in that area.

On Dec. 21 Zoubi said 1,030

Private sector urged to assume leading role in tourism promotion

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday the private sector was more capable of coping with the supply and demand mechanism in the market than the government and said his ministry's role would be limited to encouraging and guiding private sector investments.

Addressing the first meeting of the recently-established Tourism Development Council, Kabariti said the private sector "has proven that it is more capable of management than the government and the ministry's policy is to facilitate the private sector's role."

He told the meeting that he did not believe the ministry should play a major role in initiating investments in tourism. Rather, "our goal is to encourage and guide investments by the private

sector within our capabilities."

The minister called on the Tourism Development Council, comprising hotel owners, travel agents and representatives of Royal Jordanian and the U.S. Agency for International Development, to express their own options on new investments and the expansion of existing ones.

Kabariti, who is also a deputy representing Ma'an, said that the devaluation of the dinar had created "an ideal environment for tourism in the country." However, he added, "the political climate could be described as rather unhealthy."

"We only hope that tourism does not become the victim of arguments and ignorance. We hope that tourism in Jordan has great elements for success."

Kabariti, pointing out the need for a new approach for tourism promotion, said the ministry had an annual budget of JD 70,000 to

promote Jordan all over the world. "The ministry used to spread that amount in promotion all over the world in markets where we cannot compete. Now we want to concentrate on three or four markets such as Italy and France, for example, so that we can move to two or three other markets after we succeed in our initial plan," he said.

The Tourism Development Council, financed by Royal Jordanian, USAID and ministry sources, has an initial budget of \$50,000 and hopes to raise it to \$850,000 with possible contributions from Arab funds.

"We must work together towards realising tourism as the backbone of the economy," Kabariti remarked. "If we look at the figures on the balance of payments we find that tourism and remittances from Jordanian expatriates are the two major sources of revenue."

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Ensour tours potash buyers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Managing Director of the Arab Potash Company (APC) Ali Ensour Sunday started a tour of several Asian nations which import Jordanian potash to discuss more potash sales.

Ensour said that the countries he was visiting annually import about 80 per cent of Jordan's total potash production. He said talks will cover the importers' needs of potash during 1990.

Ensour's tour came in the wake of an announcement here that APC has signed contracts with a major investment company to conduct detailed feasibility studies on expanding the company's production capacity.

"APC produced 1.25 million tonnes in 1989 and plans to produce 2.25 million on an annual basis starting 1996," according to Ensour. "The expansion is bound to boost Jordan's revenues in

hard currency which last year reached \$127 million," Ensour added.

He said that the Minerals and Metals Trading Company of India had recently signed a contract with APC to import 250,000 tonnes of potash which will be shipped over the coming five months to earn the country some \$25 million.

The deal with India, the major importer of APC products, was concluded during a visit to Delhi by a company team led by Suliman Huwari.

"India imports half a million tonnes of Jordanian potash annually, which earns the country \$50 million," Ensour said.

Jordan owns 54 per cent of the APC with the rest of the shares owned by the Arab Mining Company, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Development Bank.

Committee to prepare for Islamic academy

AMMAN (Petra) — The government Sunday announced the formation of a special committee to prepare for the establishment of an Islamic academy in Jordan which would be open to Jordanians and nationals from other Arab and Islamic countries.

The announcement said the 10-member committee, chaired by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Al Faqir, will hold its first meeting Wednesday to lay down the foundation for the academy.

Association to organise 'readathon' next month

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Association for the Education of Children (NAEC) will organise a "readathon" next month to encourage reading among children in Jordan.

According to Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) officials, all students from government, private schools and those run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Armed Forces together with students from community colleges and universities in the Amman region will be welcome to take

part in the competition.

The NHF, which is responsible for the NAEC, said that the Arab reading competition was designed to encourage all citizens to read Arabic well, to promote reading especially among children and to highlight the NAEC's activities and programmes designed to benefit children. Each competition is required to have at least one sponsor who will pledge a certain amount of money for each book read by the competitor. The proceeds will benefit the NAEC's programmes and activities.

Regent urges closer cooperation between universities, community

IRBID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday called for closer cooperation between the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and Yarmouk University on the one hand and the local community on the other.

Prince Hassan, speaking during a meeting with the JUST board, stressed the need for achieving the maximum possible degree of interaction between the two universities and the Irbid Industrial Estate. He emphasised the need for striking a balance between expenditures or investment projects and revenues expected from them when drawing up regional and sectoral plans for investment projects.

The Crown Prince noted that pluralism and diversity do not conflict with national belonging and allegiance, but rather contribute to enhancing our national unity.

The JUST board members reassured Prince Hassan that the university seeks to maintain an organic link with the community and has therefore decided to undertake an evaluation of the university's four-year progress.

Earlier in the day, the Regent

attended the graduation ceremony of a new batch of combat pilots and pilot trainees at a Royal Jordanian Air Force base. Upon arrival at the base Prince Hassan was received by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Be Al Hussein, the base's commander and a number of senior officers.

At the end of the celebration, Prince Hassan presented certificates to all graduates, who included a number of trainees from other Arab countries, and awards to the excelling trainees.

Prince Hassan toured the base, and opened a gymnasium ball. He also took part in a tree-planting activity, which was organised to mark the establishment of the base. The celebration was attended by Prince Faisal, the minister of agriculture, the Mafraq governor, the commander of the Royal Jordanian Air Force and senior military and civil officials.

Milk price to go up

SALT (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture will soon raise the price of a kilogramme of fresh milk to 200 fils up from 170 fils, Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabyat said Sunday.

The Minister, who spoke at a meeting in Salt following a tour of several cattle farms within Balqa Governorate, said that the increase in price was made in light of a study prepared by the ministry on the production cost of milk in Jordan.

The question of milk prices was among various issues discussed by the minister at the meeting, which was attended by members of the board of directors and the general assembly of the Balqa Cattle Farmers Cooperative Society. The minister expressed appreciation of the society's endeavours to promote the country's livestock wealth and discussed complaints about difficulties the society was encountering, especially the rising cost of production.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition of plastic artists Arij Al Hamed and Ibrahim Al Nakhshab at the Housing Bank Complex.
- Art exhibition by seven Iraqi artists at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
- Exhibition of watercolours by Jordanian artist Shaher Al Jaroudi at Alia Art Gallery.
- Art exhibition entitled "Spanish contemporary engravings" at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by Ahmed Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.

THEATRE

- Arabic puppet play entitled "Fables from my Grandmother's Chest" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 6:00 p.m.

FILMS

- The 1990 American film festival of fantasy and comedy features "Ghostbusters" at the Philadelphia Theatre — 8:00 p.m.

CONCERT

- Arab music concert by Al Negham Al Arabi at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.

BAZAAR

- Bazaar which includes photos and cartoons depicting the Palestinian intifada at the University of Jordan's Faculty of Nursing.

POETRY RECITAL

- Arab poetry read by Rashed Issa at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation — 6:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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The 'rights' and the 'wrongs'

TWO "RIGHTS" are on a collision course over the situation in Lithuania: First and foremost is the right of Moscow to insist that none of its 15 republics break away from the union in a disorderly manner and without due process of law. There would be utter confusion and instability not only within the Soviet Union but also elsewhere in the world if parts of recognised countries secede unilaterally. In the case of Lithuania, the republic's parliament declared independence from the Soviet Union unilaterally last week and without following the Soviet constitutional steps to realise that big decision.

The second right is of course the right of the Lithuanians to exercise their well-enshrined and undisputed right to self-determination which no country or principle of domestic or international law can deny them. What adds credence to this right to self-determination for the Lithuanian people is the fact that Lithuania was an independent nation and internationally recognised as such ever since 1918 only to arbitrarily lose that cherished status and join the Soviet Union in 1940 not through the exercise of the right to self-determination but rather as a consequence of the infamous non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. There is a cardinal principle in private and public laws that an action or decision which is based on a wrong is ipso facto wrong too. There is no claim even by Moscow that the Lithuanian people had freely and lawfully acquiesced to joining the Soviet Union during the reign of the notorious Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. What transpired in 1940 was an agreement between two "tyrants" over the heads of their peoples and the least that one can say about that ignominious treaty is that it is null and void under international law.

There is but one way to redress the wrongs of the past and the wrong of the Lithuanian parliament to declare unilaterally its secession from Moscow, and that is, to conduct as early as possible a national referendum in Lithuania to measure the degree of support or lack of it to the independence declaration by the Lithuanian parliament. All the fatal shortcomings in the Lithuanian decision to break away from Moscow in a unilateral and arbitrary manner can therefore be rectified by holding a referendum under fair and free conditions.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

In an editorial Sunday, Al Ra'i daily discussed a meeting between former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Crown Prince Hassan the Regent who discussed the Middle East question and prospects for an international Middle East peace conference. The Prince urged Carter to do all he can in his mediation to bring about a settlement stressing the importance of the international conference to achieve an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab lands including Jerusalem. The Regent pointed out that continued Jewish immigration to Palestine is bound to aggravate the present situation and pose a real threat to the peace process. The question of improving conditions for the Palestinian people under Israeli rule were also discussed with Prince Hassan stressing that no improvement in living conditions could serve as a substitute for peace and a lasting solution, the paper noted. What the Prince stressed to Carter was Jordan's firm policy and continuous effort to achieve an exchange of land for peace, the paper noted. It said that the peace process does not tolerate further procrastinations and delays and cannot remain deadlocked because of Israel's practices. All peace-loving nations, said the paper, should realize the facts about the situation in the region but the United States ought to take the initiative in proving its good intentions and credibility by solving the conflict.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily criticises former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's statement on Saturday in which he stated that the Americans do not want to see the Palestinians as slaves. Tareq Misraheh notes that the Americans who have been providing Israel with all forms of military and economic aid are accessories to the crimes being committed by the Israelis in Palestine. The writer notes that the Israelis do not recognise the rights of the Palestinian people and refuse to recognise that the Palestinians are citizens of Palestine and are trying by all means to uproot them from their homes and lands. Since the Israelis are enslaving the Palestinians and stealing their property, and since the United States is a declared ally of Israel, providing it with all kinds of assistance to perpetuate its occupation of Palestine, then it is natural to conclude that the United States is an accessory to the crime of enslaving the Palestinian people. The writer notes that Carter displayed a great measure of optimism about a speedy end to the conflict in the Middle East but says that there is no justification for such optimism in view of the situation in the area and Israel's inhuman practices in the occupied lands.

Following the downfall of the Israeli government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Zionists in the United States have embarked on a wide scale campaign against President Bush and his administration, said Al Dustour Sunday. The paper noted that Bush is being attacked for his criticism of Israel's settlement policy and for describing the absorption of Jews in Arab lands as a step that does not help the peace process.

Weekly Political Pulse

Parties to peace process need to keep momentum

By Waleed Sadi

MANY countries and parties have rushed to claim credit for precipitating the Israeli cabinet crisis and for bringing down Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir from power. In fact it was the recent U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East in general and Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for Palestinian-Israeli talks that have brought about the government crisis in Israel by bringing to a head the deep division not only within the Israeli cabinet but also within the entire country. Yet this American success could not have come about without the ongoing Palestinian intifada and the patient and conciliatory policies of the PLO. It will be remembered that the PLO under Chairman Yasser Arafat had gone more than half way to meet the demands of the community of nations in a bid to kick off peace talks in the Middle East. This Palestinian initiative has continued despite of all the many temptations to foresake it in favour of a more aggressive and confrontational

policy in the occupied territories. This has enabled Washington to persist with its deepest involvement ever in the Middle East peace process which culminated in Baker's formula for peace talks. What remains to be done is to have the PLO persevere in its peaceful path by rejecting all calls for militancy. The chance of a lifetime to start collecting on this long-durated Palestinian investment in peace may have indeed arrived; it would be catastrophic if all the time and energy spent on it are allowed to be derailed by extremism of whatever nature or source.

This is not to suggest that the path of peace henceforth and in the wake of the fall of Shamir and his doctrinaire ideas will be strewn with roses. Rather it is a suggestion to persevere a little longer and explore the possibilities of peace in the new political era until the bitter end before turning sour and seeking other alternatives in which there

might not be any winners or losers. For even if the Israeli Labour Party assumes power under the leadership of Shimon Peres, there are no assurances yet that it has truly changed colour and opted for peace with the Palestinian people under the PLO's leadership. As a matter of fact the utterances of the leadership of the Labour constituencies, past and present, on the role of the PLO in the peace talks are notably as negative as those of the Likud with whom they professed deep division on the issue of war and peace in the Middle East. There is, nevertheless, always hope that behind the Labour rhetoric against PLO involvement in the projected Palestinian-Israeli talks, there remains a reservoir of common sense and realism which seeks to seize upon the rare opportunity offered by the PLO to strike a deal of a lifetime between the two sides. If this happens, then the leadership of Yasser Arafat and his policies would have

been vindicated. If not, then Arafat's gamble on peace would have to be declared bankrupt, null and void, for as long as one can gaze into the future. The final arbiter of the entire peace process will of course be the Israeli voters who will be soon asked once again to cast their votes not only to choose their representatives in the Knesset but also to choose between peace or war in this region. Surely, the Israeli people will be hamstrung with the prospect of yet another conflagration in the Middle East in which mass destructive weapons are anticipated to be deployed. The choice of war instead of peace in the Middle East will surely bring disaster to present and future generations of Arabs as well as Israelis. This cataclysmic probability will surely sober up the Israeli electorate to the truth that awaits them if they allow the chances of peace in the region to slip away.

Still, over and above the call on the Palestinians to perse-

vere and the Israelis to exercise wise judgment when they vote next time around, Washington is also called upon to persevere as well with a view to completing what it has started to do in the first place. Any American wavering or weakening of resolve would have immeasurable negative effects on the entire peace process which is still hanging by a thread. Above all, if U.S. financial or military aid must continue to pour into Israel, come rain or sunshine, the least that the Arab side would hope for is to have such impulsive aid organically linked not only with the beginning of peace talks in the Middle East but also to the success of these talks. It is one thing to start negotiations between Israel and the Arabs and quite another to have the talks come to fruition. And as long as Israel's self-confidence, economically and militarily, gets always fortified to the extent that leaves the Jewish state with no real incentive to bar-

Why Palestinians lose out in the U.S.

By Alfred M. Lilienthal

FORTY TWO years after the creation of the state of Israel and the onset of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, no settlement is yet in sight.

Neither the turmoil and bloodshed in the West Bank and Gaza nor the devastation of Lebanon has moved the American government to use Israel's dependency (to the tune of an annual \$3.5 billion subsidy) to press its government to be more forthcoming. Arafat's acceptance at Algiers and Geneva of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 and the renunciation of terrorism have only been met by Shamir's elections proposal and the Mubarak and Baker amendments, none of which accept the sine qua non to peace, the right of the Palestinians to establish a state in their own homeland.

The power of the Israeli lobby

What remains totally unalterable and decisive is the never-faltering power in the United States of the Zionists and the pro-Israeli forces. The lobby and its adjuncts are even more effective today than when they influenced President Truman in 1947 to push for the creation of Israel at the United Nations and then to recognise this state seven minutes after it came into being. Such action, it must be remembered, was taken over the opposition of Secretary of State George Marshall, Secretary of Defence James Forrestal, and Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

Despite the invasion of Lebanon, the Sabra-Shatila massacres, the Iran-contra scandal, the Pollard affair and the intifada, the plethora of Arab-American groups supporting the goals of the Palestine Liberation Organisation have made scarcely a dent in Zionist power and have failed to advance their cause in a practical, political sense. True, Israel's stock has greatly declined since the television coverage of the intifada began to expose the brutal treatment of Palestinians, but public opinion has not moved in favour of the Palestinians, nor have inroads been made in the White House and in Congress, which count most.

The PLO still conjures up the terrorist image. And Palestinian factionalism causes many Americans to react: "The Palestinians are killing one another, so why should we concern ourselves about their fate?" And the internecine rivalry among Arab-American groups here only reinforces this image of disunity. The media has been enabled to play upon the execution of some 140 Palestinian alleged collaborators and the killing of 40 Israelis to smother the slaying by the Israeli military or settlers of over 750 Palestinian civilians.

Mubarak on a tightrope

Mubarak's Egypt is totally dependent on America's \$1.5 billion subsidy which Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the ensuing Camp David Accords earned for his country. The Egyptian president is forced to walk a tightrope between a friendship with the Palestinian leadership, whose cause he would like to advance, and his dependency on the U.S. Egypt's foreign minister, Ismail Abdin Maguid, conveniently absented himself from the Arab League meeting in Tunis in December. Khalid Al Has-

ember to avoid joining in expressions of support for direct PLO participation in the proposed Israeli-Palestinian talks and criticism of the negative, obstinate stance of the Israeli government. Egypt's participation in such an Arab statement would not only strain relations between Egypt and Israel, but might even be viewed by Likud as a violation of the spirit of Camp David. In effect, Egypt dare not bite the hand that feeds it. Money still talks on the Middle East political scene, whether domestically or internationally. When the United Nations considered a resolution to upgrade the PLO's present status as an organisation to that of an observer state, the United States warned that if it was passed it would retaliate by withholding its 25 per cent share of the U.N.'s annual \$850m budget, a move that would bankrupt the organisation.

In truth, the PLO cannot

san, one of Yasser Arafat's most trusted advisers, was dispatched to Washington for talks and study. As a result, perhaps past Palestinian disdain for the art of public relations and imagery will be reappraised by the PLO leadership in Tunis, with a better understanding of why its cause is making so little progress where it counts most.

That Judaism is not Zionism, that Zionism is not Judaism, and to be anti-Zionist is not to be anti-Semitic, is not nitpicking, but is of the essence. Without acceptance of this dogma, there is little hope that a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine co-existing together, will ever be realised.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, wrote in the New York Times about changes in Eastern Europe: "Freedom of choice is the foundation of the new order." Do not the Palestinians deserve to be part of this newly emancipated world? And who can say they will not if only they can overcome their seemingly congenital incapacity for collaboration? — Middle East International, London.

Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



On 'Contemporary Art in the Islamic World'

By Nicola A. Ziadeh

HISTORIANS of Islamic arts (and architecture) have been at loss to identify the most suitable way of dealing with the subject. The various branches of artistic expression which appeared and developed over such a long period and in an area as vast as any civilisation has covered, and more importantly are still being produced, certainly present difficulties. Could an art historian treat the whole thing as one unit? The answer is, mostly, "No." Should the subject be divided according to countries? Or to periods? No satisfactory answer is possible.

All methods, by the way, have been tried. Besides, some art historians seek, or even see, a unity in Islamic art (or arts) which guides them, or forces them, to deal with their topics almost spiritually or something like that.

Medical Aid for Palestinians comes to Jordan

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — The London-based charity organisation Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), which provides medical help to Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories and to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, will establish a chapter in Jordan soon, according to the MAP representative in the Kingdom, Nadia Alami.

Alami told the Jordan Times that the MAP chapter in Jordan, whose honorary chairman will be His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, is the fifth outside its London headquarters. It is now in the final stages of its registration as a charity organisation in the Kingdom, she said.

The Jordan chapter, whose executive chairman is Abdul Majid Shoman, chairman of the Arab Bank, will be one of the most important for MAP because Jordan is the first stop for many of the wounded in the Palestinian uprising, some of whom we plan to treat," Alami explained.

Cooperating with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, Oxfam, NORWAC and other international non-government organisations, MAP — which describes itself as a non-political humanitarian organisation — concentrates on helping civilian victims of war and works closely with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The organisation also treats non-Palestinians, especially children with special needs," Alami said.

She said MAP had received international recognition, and was well-known for the efforts of the staff and volunteers touring the world and arousing humanitarian interest on Palestinian victims whether in refugee camps in Lebanon or

in the occupied lands.

"Hundreds of newspapers, radio and television interviews were conducted with well-known MAP volunteers, Drs. Swee Ang and Pauline Cutting, both of whom have written books about Palestinian suffering in Lebanon, and addressed thousands of meetings and conferences worldwide. Pauline (author of "Children of the Siege" about the Palestinian camp siege in Beirut in 1985, and Suzie Wighton, a MAP nurse, both have received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and Member of the British Empire

(MBE) from Queen Elizabeth II," Alami noted.

She added that MAP had received recognition from the British government, including the Conservative and Labour parties, the Liberal Democrat and Social Democratic parties, as well as trade unions, professional organisations and religious foundations.

"With the intifada going on, Palestinians inside the occupied territories need our utmost medical help, especially in light of the poor availability of medical and health facilities there," Alami said.

MAP has 22 projects in the



Dr. Nicola A. Ziadeh

82, is a retired professor who has taught at the American University of Beirut, Harvard University, the University of Jordan and the Lebanese University. He has written numerous books on Arab and Islamic history and civilisation, and has prepared about 1,400 radio scripts, both in English and Arabic. In today's Jordan Times, Dr. Ziadeh resumes a series of articles after a two-year break.

only artistic training is appreciation — and this through museums and books.

Here the reader finds in each chapter a brief account of the more recent development of art in the country concerned, with variations depending on certain activities, such as galleries and institutes (Jordan) etc. This is followed by brief biographical notes on artists of the country, with — and here lies the real beauty

and benefit of the volume under discussion — ample illustrations both coloured and black and white.

This is a magnificent volume — rich, informative, instructive and gently attending to — no doubt by Princess Wijdan.

Contemporary Art in the Islamic World, Princess Wijdan Ali, Scorpion Publishing Limited, London, 1989.

School dropout turns novelist

By Paul Bea-Itzak
Reuter

SAN FRANCISCO — For Holly Uyemoto, author of a well-reviewed new novel called *Rebel Without a Clue*, the path to literary success began when she dropped out of school.

"I was told by teachers and peers alike that I was not very intelligent," recalls Uyemoto, 20, whose book centres on the lives of teenagers, one of whom has AIDS, in a wealthy area of California.

"What really tore it," she said, was discovering that her name was on a list of students destined for a high school that had a student body largely comprised of delinquents.

Aged 15, she quit school altogether, which she admits did not please her parents.

"They were homicidal at first," Uyemoto said in a recent interview, dressed entirely in black and wearing a large butterfly-shaped ring.

"They just wanted me to toil away at the salt mines of education and bungle along like the rest of the people really talk."

"Her words on the page sound

as if they came out of a human mouth," said Lisa Healy, editor

at Crown.

Healy was also impressed by a first novel that is not autobiographical and one in which a female author writes from a male perspective.

"You very seldom see someone make such an imaginative leap in voice, particularly in the first person," Healy said.

Uyemoto is more modest.

"I see myself as hanging by knees from the bottom rung of the ladder of literary credibility, swinging back and forth," the author said during an interview, frequently pausing to find the right phrase or suddenly bursting into laughter.

Uyemoto says she is nothing like her characters, who take drugs as easily as some people take vitamins. She claims that in person she is just the opposite.

"I'm embarrassed to be me," she said.

"I say things in my writing that I never get to say while I'm in the car with the guy who's telling me that I'm just a soulless pod, and then he pushes me out and tries to back over me unsuccessfully with his car...metaphorically speaking," she said.



A mother watches over a young intifada victim in Makassed hospital. The intifada means many such cases are treated by MAP staff.

in the occupied lands.

"Hundreds of newspapers, radio and television interviews were conducted with well-known MAP volunteers, Drs. Swee Ang and Pauline Cutting, both of whom have written books about Palestinian suffering in Lebanon, and addressed thousands of meetings and conferences worldwide. Pauline (author of "Children of the Siege" about the Palestinian camp siege in Beirut in 1985, and Suzie Wighton, a MAP nurse, both have received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and Member of the British Empire

occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, providing hospitalisation schemes, specialised volunteer doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists and nurses, laboratory equipment and other medical equipment, she said. The organisation, working with Palestinian staff and training them, provides professional and material assistance through hospitals, health centres and the popular health committees.

Although MAP is presently preoccupied with the occupied territories, Alami said, there are also several projects for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Apple Computer expo 90

Tuesday, March 20 1990 Language

11:00 AM	Apple Preview System 7.0 E
4:00 PM	Bilingual Productivity Tools A
6:00 PM	Oracle for Macintosh E

A closer look at how the Macintosh enhances work environments using spreadsheets and other tools.

The latest in connectivity between Macintosh and other computers.

Seminar schedule

Wednesday, March 21 1990 Language

11:00 AM	Communication E
4:00 PM	Total Publishing Solution A
6:00 PM	Multimedia E

The networking power of a Macintosh with any Macintosh, PC and mini computers.

Taking a publication from A to Z, while showing the available tools.

Presenting information through colour, graphics, sound and animation.

Macintosh in Higher Education A

How different faculties in universities are applying Macintosh technologies.

Limited Seating
please call for
reservations

Thursday, March 22 1990 Language

11:00 AM Macintosh in Higher Education A

Why Macintosh, Arribation today and in the future.

4:00 PM Graphics E

Professional tools for graphic designers, publisher and others on the Macintosh.

Macintosh Arribation A

Why Macintosh, Arribation today and in the future.

6:00 PM

Macintosh in Higher Education A

How different faculties in universities are applying Macintosh technologies.

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6:00 PM

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7:00 PM

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Economy

OPEC agrees to renew ceilings

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — OPEC ministers agreed Saturday to restrain oil production in coming months to try to keep crude prices high, but some member nations have violated production quotas before.

The ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) wound up six hours of talks by renewing their support for a target price of \$18 a barrel.

They also decided anew to carry into the April-June quarter their current production ceiling of a little more than 12 million barrels a day. The cap was set last November for the first six months of the year, but has been broken.

Led by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, the 13-nation group has been pumping as much as 23.7 million barrels a day, according to analysts.

The United Arab Emirates will likely continue pumping about

two million barrels a day, double its quota. The emirates did not sign onto the November agreement setting the current production ceiling.

Kuwait Oil Minister Ali Khalifa Al Sabah has reportedly said his country does not have to abide by its quota when prices are above \$18.

To meet the output cap, some of the countries would have to cut production.

"We expect that we will withdraw some quantities from the market during the (coming) months," Algerian Mines Minister Sadek Boussena, who presided over the meeting, told reporters. "This at least could avoid a decrease in the prices..."

An OPEC report predicted demand would slump in the April-June period to 20.8 million barrels a day before rebounding to 21.4 million barrels a day in the third quarter.

often ignored by members. Some of the countries are producing near their limits and would likely be unable to pump much more.

Boussena said, "the feeling of the countries is that we still need for the short-term ... a system of quotas."

The average price of a basket of seven crudes monitored by OPEC reached \$20.56 a barrel in the first week of January, but has been slipping since then, falling in the second week of March to \$17.91 a barrel.

Demand for the group's oil usually contracts with the approaching warm weather in the United States and other consuming nations and the price is expected to decrease in the prices..."

OPEC members are: Algeria, Ecuador, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

"Prices expected will go down (in the second quarter), but I don't see any catastrophe," Indonesian Oil Minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita said in an interview. "I don't think it will go below \$17 (a barrel)."

The ministers opened the meeting of a special monitoring committee Friday evening at OPEC headquarters. Saturday, they buddied privately in Boussena's suite at a luxury hotel where most stay.

The ministers plan to meet in May to set pricing and production guidelines for the last half of the year.

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China tells jobless to consume less

HONG KONG (AP) — China's ministry of labour is tackling growing unemployment by telling jobless workers to stay home and consume less, a pro-Beijing paper has reported.

The Ta Kung Pao, citing a ministry document, also reported that the ministry will begin requiring work and temporary residence permits for peasants looking for jobs in the cities.

The new policy is an attempt to stem the growing tide of rural unemployed flooding China's cities in search of work. Last year, tens of millions of peasants converted on major cities, causing a rise in crime and social problems. More than 2.5 million flocked to Canton alone, where tens of thousands camped outside the railway station.

The report said China's cities would be even less capable this year than last of coping with the problem. Urban unemployment now hovers between four and five per cent, the paper said, more than a 100 per cent jump over January of last year. The official Chinese figure is slightly less than four per cent.

A Western China watcher in Hong Kong estimated that about 30 million in China's 550 million-member labour force are jobless. In addition, analysts say, more and more Chinese are reaching working age, putting further strains on the system.

The report said China's cities will have to do a work permit and a temporary residence permit if they head to a large or medium-size city. In this way, the government will be able "to control the automatic increase in the urban labour force," Ta Kung Pao said.

The report did not say when the permit programme, which is bound to cause a large bureaucratic headache, would begin. China already has a policy of permanent residence permits for cities but many evade it.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Kuwait refineries earn \$284m

KUWAIT (R) — The Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has earned about \$284 million in its 1989 fiscal year from the 760,000 barrels per day produced by its three local refineries. The company's financial manager, Abdul Maguid Al Taraboushi, said that about 36,000 barrels per day (b/d) of oil was consumed locally at subsidised prices while the rest was exported. Taraboushi told Reuters that KNPC's net profits in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1989, were \$3.2 million dinars (\$284.2 million) in comparison to \$75.9 million dinars (\$258.52 million) the previous year, when domestic refineries produced some 649,000 b/d. Kuwait, which currently produces about 1.9 million b/d of oil, has aggressively expanded its refining operations both at home and abroad to maximise revenue from its crude.

Batelco reports higher profit

BAHRAIN (R) — The Bahrain Telecommunications Company (BATELCO) has said its 1989 net profit rose by five per cent to 20.5 million dinars (\$55 million). BATELCO General Manager Brian Wood said a jump in the number of international telephone calls and growing use of facsimile machines had boosted income from international traffic by 10 per cent to 20.6 million dinars (\$55 million). He declined to give a figure for total income ahead of an annual shareholders meeting on March 24. BATELCO is owned 20 per cent by London-based Cable and Wireless PLC, 40 per cent by Bahrain's government and 40 per cent by local firms and individuals. Its shares are traded on the Bahrain Stock Exchange. Wood said the number of telephone lines in Bahrain jumped to 87,700 in 1989 from 83,800 the previous year.

Elf strike oil in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — The French company Elf Aquitaine has struck its first oil in the Atallah-North field in northeastern Syria with one test well producing 8,000 b/d of light crude, oil ministry officials have said. Elf, which began exploration in northeastern Syria in 1989, is yet to decide the geological reserve and production capacity of the field, they said. The officials said Elf was planning to put the field, the latest in a series of discoveries in the region, on early production. Syria, a member of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), said Western companies to invest \$1.1 billion in exploration and production of oil and gas in 1990.

Iran non-oil exports increase

NICOSIA (R) — Iran exported non-oil goods worth \$669 million in the eight-month period to Nov. 21, 33.7 per cent more than the similar period in 1988, the Iranian news agency IRNA has said. Export items included hand-woven carpets, pistachio nuts and animal skins, it said. Iran's main source of foreign exchange, crude oil sales, were expected to reach \$12 billion in the year to March 20, according to official figures.

Judge favours executing 'terrorists'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's top judge has vowed to crack down on corruption, saying the judiciary was ready to execute "economic terrorists" if parliament agreed. The tough talk followed warnings in press and parliament that corruption and profiteering may flourish in the new pro-business climate fostered by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. "If the parliament approves, the judiciary will go as far as execution in dealing with economic terrorists," Tehran radio quoted Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi as saying. "The judiciary will toughen its strict attitude towards saboteurs of economic affairs even in government organisations," Yazdi told Muslim clerics in the holy city of Qom. In several widely publicised embezzlement and fraud trials over the past two years, Iranian courts have handed down jail and flogging sentences and heavy fines.

Rouble reform divides economists

MOSCOW (R) — In the days before perestroika, there was no such thing as a Soviet budget deficit.

As Mikhail Gorbachev's closest political ally in the Kremlin leadership, Alexander Yakovlev, said recently, the answer was simple: At the end of each year the government printed extra money or expropriated the profits of state companies.

And the deficit disappeared. The legacy of communist central planning and liberal use of the printing press is billions of practically worthless roubles washing around in the system with precious few goods to buy.

Reducing that "monetary overhang" poses one of the biggest challenges to Soviet reformist policy-makers trying to pull the country out of a deepening economic crisis.

But liberal economists are divided. Fierce debate rages over how to restore the value of the rouble and its purchasing power.

One of the few things they can agree on is that the policies of the old days are discredited and must not be repeated.

"The first thing we must do is stop printing money," Abel

opposition legislators in the upper house.

"Our corporations are wealthy and strong, but this wealth has come at the expense of long working hours and a low standard of living. It is time to redress this imbalance," he said.

Kaifu, who last month promised U.S. President George Bush to do his best to carry out the reforms, is fighting his government's tendency to become bogged down in domestic disputes.

Japan's parliament has accomplished few trade related reforms in the year since it became embroiled in battles over a bribery scandal and a controversial tax.

Kaifu is urging Japan Socialist Party Chairwoman Takako Doi and other opposition leaders to abandon their attacks on the sales tax given the comfortable majority his party won in Feb. 13 parliamentary elections.

"I don't think it would be exaggerating to say we have the full support and understanding of the people on this issue," he said.

Opposition parties unsuccessfully based their campaigns in last month's lower house election on calls to abolish the sales tax, which along with a series of sex and money scandals eroded public support for the ruling party and contributed to its defeat in an upper house election last July.

Kaifu's opponents, led by the Socialists, the no. 1 opposition party, dominate the upper house and are likely to obstruct action on a number of trade-related issues facing parliament.

These include plans to reform Japan's distribution system, land use laws to provide more land for housing and cut inflated prices, and increased spending on roads, parks and sewers to improve the general quality of life — changes Washington says are needed to eliminate "structural" trade barriers behind the chronic U.S. trade deficit with Japan.

Meanwhile, U.S. trade negotiators have admitted "little progress" in cracking Japan's barriers to American exports and said only time will tell whether Bush's summit with Kaifu will produce results.

Two key senators threatened to launch a protectionist trade war with Japan if Tokyo does not bow to U.S. demands.

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Sports

Britain plans big security operation for World Cup

LONDON (AP) — The British government has ordered its biggest security operation for a sports event to try to prevent hooliganism by its soccer fans at the World Cup, it was reported Sunday.

The Sunday Telegraph quoted unidentified government sources as saying the programme would include use of British police as spotters to try to identify known soccer thugs for their Italian counterparts.

The cup, soccer's world championship, opens in 12 Italian cities June 8.

The paper also said that authorities were concerned that trouble could erupt in Genoa, where ferries departs from the Italian mainland for Sardinia, the island where the English team will be based.

The Telegraph said that, in addition, towns in France and Italy have been warned to be prepared for trouble by British fans travelling by car to Italy for the World Cup.

"This is the biggest operation the government has ever mounted for a sporting event," the newspaper quoted one source as saying. "This effort is being made to save our reputation but, in spite of all this work, we have to prepare for trouble."

Last week, top British police officials said they had uncovered plans for battles at the World Cup between hooligans from England and the Netherlands.

The two teams, whose followers are among the most violent in Europe, play in the same first-round group on Sardinia and Sicily.

Another British newspaper, the Sunday Times, reported that hooligans from around the country were plotting violence at an exhibition match between England and Tunisia in Tunis June 2, and outside the stadium in the Sardinia capital of Cagliari June 16, when England and France play.

It quoted Sean Gibb, identified as a known hooligan from Cheetham, England, as saying he was looking forward to "some violence" at the cup.

Capriati, Becker score more wins

KEY BISCAYNE (R) — American teenager Jennifer Capriati upset sixth-seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia for the second consecutive week to advance to the third round of the \$2.55 million International Players Tennis Championships Saturday.

Second-seeded Zina Garrison of the United States was upset by Julie Halard of France and men's second seed Boris Becker of West Germany struggled before defeating qualifier Fabrice Santoro of France in this second-round match of the 96-player tournament.

Top-seeds and defending champions Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia and Gabriela Sabatini were both winners.

Lendl struggled but defeated Jens Woermann of West Germany 6-3(3-7). Sabatini had fewer problems beating Sandra Wasserman of Belgium 6-3.

Fifth-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain outlasted South African Dinky Van Rensburg in a three-hour and five minute marathon played almost entirely from the baseline.

Sixth-seeded Aaron Krickstein was upset by Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland while eighth-seed Tim Mayotte fell easily to Soviet Alexander Volkov in other second round matches.

Capriati, who reached the finals of her first professional tournament in Boca Raton, Florida, last week by beating Sukova, said that she was

more confident and more cautious this week for that very reason.

"Today, I knew what to expect, but she also knew how to play me this time so I knew I had to play better. I think I played very well today. I wasn't really expecting to win either time, but I'm really happy I did," Capriati said.

Capriati took advantage of very erratic tennis from Sukova as well as nine double-faults, including three in one game, from Sukova's normally reliable serve.

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Boris Becker

Schneider wins slalom and the finale season title

ARE, Sweden (AP) — Vreni Schneider of Switzerland captured the women's season slalom title Sunday by winning the last race on the World Cup tour.

Schneider was only 11th after the first run, then capitalized on mishaps in the second run by two of her main rivals.

Claudia Strobl of Austria, who had an eight-point edge ahead of Schneider going into the finale, fell less than seven seconds into the second run and was disqualified.

It quoted Sean Gibb, identified as a known hooligan from Cheetham, England, as saying he was looking forward to "some violence" at the cup.

Strobl was fastest in the opening run, .70 ahead of teammate Peter Kronberger, the overall champion, who also was disqualified in the second run after a gate miss.

Schneider, a double Olympic winner in the 1988 winter games in Calgary and the World Cup overall champion last season, had

a combined time of one minute, 10.20 seconds.

Patricia Charvet of France was a surprise runner-up, .50 behind Schneider, for her best slalom finish of the season.

World Cup Rookie Perrilla Wiberg of Sweden placed third, .67 behind.

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Schneider topped the final slalom standings with 125 points while Strobl had 108.

It was the fifth slalom victory of the season for Schneider. But she came into the race after two straight failures, having been eliminated by gate misses recently at Stranda, Norway, and Vemdal, Sweden.

The daily news said Steinbrenner is being blackmailed by an unemployed gambler who was involved in his legal battle with outfielder Dave Winfield and to whom he paid \$40,000, according to the New York daily news.

In Sunday's editions, the news said Steinbrenner admitted paying the money Jan. 8 to Howard Spira. Spira gave Steinbrenner information to use in his suit against Winfield, but Steinbrenner said that was not the reason for the payoff.

The paper said Spira signed an agreement promising never to disclose the payoff but has threatened to make it public, along with their tape-recorded conversations, unless Steinbrenner gives him an additional \$110,000 and a job at his American Shipbuilding Co. in Tampa, Florida.

Steinbrenner, in turn, has accused Spira of "extortion in its purest form" and Spira is under investigation by the FBI, which

PAKISTAN DAY CELEBRATIONS

To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Pakistan Day, the Embassy of Pakistan in Amman will hold a flag hoisting ceremony followed by a reception on Friday, 23rd March, 1990 at 10:00 a.m. at the Chancery premises opposite Bharat Church, Jabal Luweibdeh, Amman.

All Pakistani nationals alongwith their families are cordially invited to attend the function.

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Arsenal defeat sweet revenge for ex-manager

LONDON (R) — Nearly 14 years ago, Bobby Campbell quit his job as Arsenal coach after failing to land the coveted manager's job in succession to Bertie Mee.

On Saturday, he returned to Highbury for the first time as a manager and walked away a very happy man indeed.

Not only did his team Chelsea do what no other side have done this season, they effectively shattered the English league soccer champions' fading hopes of retaining the title.

The 1-0 win dealt Arsenal their first home defeat of the season and gave midfielder John Bumstead a goal to celebrate on his 300th appearance for the London club.

"I am highly delighted with this win but I'd better not say too much about why," said a jubilant Campbell.

Arsenal remains in third place in the league, just one point in front of Chelsea who are also nursing wounds inflicted by west Londoners, going down 3-1 at Queen's Park Rangers who

could have scored more.

Norwich drew 1-1 with relegation-threatened Millwall but the match turned bad in the 61st minute when Norwich's Robert Fleck and Millwall's Steve Wood were sent off for fighting.

For several disgruntled strikers, Saturday proved a time to remind their managers just what they could do.

Transfer-listed Tooy Cottage scored a brace as Everton beat Crystal Palace 4-0 while Manchester City's one-time England international Clive Allen returned to the first team after two months out and hit a penalty in their 1-1 draw at Luton.

Villa's Ian Ormondroyd, dropped to the substitutes' bench to make way for new \$2.4 million signing Tony Cascarino, scored his team's winner at Derby.

Brought on for the second half, the lanky Ormondroyd broke the ice in the 71st minute to give Villa a crucial 1-0 win.

New York Yankees owner is blackmailed by gambler

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner is being blackmailed by an unemployed gambler who was involved in his legal battle with outfielder Dave Winfield and to whom he paid \$40,000, according to the New York daily news.

In Sunday's editions, the news said Steinbrenner admitted paying the money Jan. 8 to Howard Spira. Spira gave Steinbrenner information to use in his suit against Winfield, but Steinbrenner said that was not the reason for the payoff.

The daily news said it listened to the tapes and quoted Steinbrenner as telling Spira in a March 2 phone call:

"I offered you some money. You said, 'no, George, just give me this much more, just give me a little more, give me 40.' All right, I went against everybody's advice, I gave you the 40 to try and help you and they said, they told me; 'sure as hell, he'll be back trying to get more out of you.' And damned if you didn't."

"And then they come in and they tell me, hey, he's saying he's

going to take the tapes and he's going to the papers, and he's gonna do this and he's gonna do that." I said, 'he can't do that. I gave him moneys to help him. And I'm not going to give him any more.'

"If it was stupidity on my part, then it was," the news quoted Steinbrenner as saying in an interview Saturday. "But I honest to God felt that I could help this young man to get his life straight."

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Famine in April, Ethiopia warns

ADDIS ABABA (R) — As relief agencies prepared Sunday to send a first food convoy across the front line into rebel-held areas of northern Ethiopia, the government warned that serious famine could strike the drought-hit region next month.

"The problem of famine as much would start in April. That is why we say this is a critical period," Yilma Kassaye, head of the government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), said.

The government and the rebels have agreed that a consortium of church-based relief agencies, the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP), may truck food across the military lines into rebel-held areas of Wollo and Tigre provinces where an officially estimated one million people face starvation.

But the JRP's "safe passage" operation will only relieve part of Ethiopia's famine problem.

Some 4.5 million people face starvation in northern Ethiopia

this year due to a severe drought which has been aggravated by the civil war.

A critical situation is developing in the Dead Sea province of Eritrea, where the main port Massawa has been in rebel hands since mid-February.

The government-held towns in the central highlands of Eritrea — including the regional capital, Asmara — can only be reached by plane. Nearly two million people in the province face imminent food shortages.

The government has appealed to foreign donors to finance a massive airlift of food aid to Asmara from Asab, the only commercial port in Ethiopia still in government hands.

Western donors and the United Nations are more attracted by a rebel proposal for Massawa to be used as a free port for channelling food aid into both government and rebel held areas.

Yilma was adamant, however,

that an airlift could supply the needs of Eritrea and he reiterated the government's opposition to using Massawa as an entry point for food aid while the port remained in rebel hands.

The RRC sent a single plane-load of relief supplies from Asab to Asmara Saturday, but Yilma said his organisation lacked funds to mount regular flights to the beleaguered city.

The government and independent relief organisations say there would be immense logistical problems in trucking food over 1,200 kilometres of mountainous roads through rebel territory in seven years.

"If more food aid is needed, we will supply more food... but there is no point in giving it if you can't deliver it," Landry told Reuters.

She said Canada had so far pledged 50 million Canadian dollars to tackle the latest famine in Ethiopia.

Relief operations into rebel areas have been mounted from neighbouring Sudan.

the two main rebel groups in northern Ethiopia to declare a ceasefire to facilitate famine relief operations.

"The main concern of my intervention was to get the government to agree to an immediate ceasefire in the corridors which would be used for food delivery," Canada's Minister for Aid and Development Monique Landry said at the end of a 24-hour visit to Addis Ababa Sunday.

So far, donors have pledged more than 400,000 tonnes of food aid to tackle the hunger arising from Ethiopia's third major drought in seven years.

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U.S. to go ahead with SDI tests in Pacific

KWAJALEIN, Marshall Islands (R) — The U.S. will go ahead with the first major field tests of Star Wars weapons technology by June despite controversy over budget cuts for big-ticket weapon systems in Washington, a senior U.S. army general said.

"Kwajalein Atoll is ideally suited for the tests because of its location. The operation at Kwajalein will continue to be strong," said Lieutenant General Robert Hammond, the commander of the army's Strategic Defense Command.

"The mission at Kwajalein is increasing and it will be properly resourced," he said, after visiting the mid-Pacific test site last week.

Hammond, who is based in Washington, said construction of new missile facilities and ground-based radar will go ahead despite plans announced by U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney to close more than 100 military bases in the United States.

The U.S. army has spent millions of dollars to build missile launching and support facilities for the first field tests of Star Wars weapons technology, known as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), at the test site at Kwajalein, 6,700 kilometres west of California.

The army will try to intercept and destroy unarmed missiles fired from California before they land in the waters around the atoll.

Hammond, speaking in an interview Friday, said they will use computers, infrared sensors and ground-based radar to guide rockets to destroy the missiles in the skies above Kwajalein.

The army will receive at least a third of the \$3.8 billion approved by the U.S. Congress to develop the Star Wars programme, he said.

The atoll will see a rapid expansion of its facilities. It is already the primary U.S. army missile range where MX, Trident and Minuteman missiles are tested on a regular basis.

The move from the camps in

Thatcher to stay on to fight next elections

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, brushing aside pressure from critics to resign, was quoted Sunday as saying she would fight "every inch of the way" to win a fourth general election.

She said in an interview with the Sunday Express newspaper that the policies of her ruling Conservative Party were right despite high interest rates, protests over a new poll tax and huge leads by the opposition Labour Party in opinion polls.

"Frequently the policies that are absolutely right have two effects — the short term is difficult and the long term is beneficial. You have to have the courage to stick to it," she said.

She dismissed Labour's claim that the Conservative Party was in terminal decline but acknowledged that the net general election would be a tough fight.

"I have always found elections tough. I have never assumed we would win. We fight every inch of the

way. We fight on a very good manifesto always. We always know where we are going and people know we will stick to our chosen course," Thatcher said.

Thatcher brushed aside reports that at least a quarter of Conservative members of parliament wanted her to quit before the next general election and that some were plotting to topple her.

"I do not believe many are doing that. You get ups and downs in politics and most of us know how to stay steady through it."

She recognised that the government's unpopularity reflected unease about high repayments for home owners and the poll tax but dismissed talk of an economic recession.

"Look at the amount of retail sales, the amount of spending, the amount of overseas holidays. This is not a poor country."

She said the benefits of the poll tax, a new levy replacing property taxes, would eventually become apparent.

U.S. could pull forces out of Philippines in a year

MANILA (R) — The United States will pull its forces out of the Philippines within a year if it cannot get a new agreement to extend use of key military bases, the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific said.

The army will try to intercept and destroy unarmed missiles fired from California before they land in the waters around the atoll.

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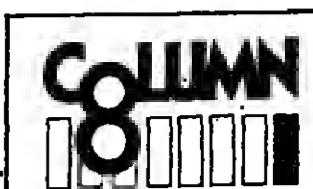
to move out."

Exploratory talks on the future of the bases, used to defend the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions, will open in Manila in mid-April, with President Aquino keeping her options open on whether to renew the lease or not.

There is strong pressure in the Philippine senate to end the agreement. Philippine Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos has suggested a gradual phase-out of the bases, which bring in around \$1 billion a year for the country and employ 68,000 Filipino workers.

The United States would like to see the agreement renewed for at least 10 years, arguing that despite a reduced Soviet threat in the region a U.S. presence is still needed to ensure security.

But the negotiating atmosphere has been soured by Philippine government charges that the United States has reneged on earlier pledges to pay \$481 million a year in 1990 and 1991 in direct aid and assistance.



France's new opera house opens

PARIS (R) — France's new national opera house, plagued by financial problems, technical headaches and artistic squabbles, staged its grand opening nine months late Saturday with a glittering capacity audience and a near disaster. The audience gasped and sang in the Bastille Opera House crouched in horror when a huge prop crashed into a steel curtain sending splinters flying onto the stage below during the opening-night performance of a neglected work by 19th century French composer Hector Berlioz.

But the Paris performance of the Trojans, a five-and-a-half-hour epic chosen for its patriotic associations, continued despite the hitch in the elaborate computer-controlled scene-shifting machinery and the first-night crowd later roared its approval. The 2,700-seat house, which Chairman Pierre Berge hopes will one day rival the great opera house of Vienna, La Scala in Milan and New York's Met, was packed for what one of only 12 performances of its first season.

That star of the show, the black soprano Grace Bumbry in the role of Cassandra, took numerous curtain calls for her full-throated performance. Fans called out "bravo" and threw flowers on stage at the end of the first scene. The opera house, conceived by Socialist President Francois Mitterrand in 1982 to bring a traditionally elitist art to the people, dominates the square where Parisians stormed the Eastgate Prison at the start of the 1789 French Revolution. Built at a cost of 2.2 billion francs (\$385 million), it was initially scheduled to open last July during celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the revolution.

Stars attend AIDS benefit concert

NEW YORK (AP) — Some of the biggest names in the music industry turned out Saturday night for a benefit concert billed as the single largest fund-raising event for AIDS. The "that's what friends are for" concert at Radio City Music Hall was expected to raise between \$2 million and \$3 million. Carly Simon, Whitney Houston, Air Supply, the Eurythmics, Diana Ross, Jackson, Daryl Hall and John Oates, Patti Smith, Milli Vanilli and Kenny G. were among those artists scheduled to perform. The concert was sponsored by Arista Records, which was celebrating its 15th anniversary. Proceeds from the concert were earmarked for the Gay Men's Health Crisis and other AIDS organizations.

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Chinese leaders call for unity

PEKING (R) — China's leaders assembled Sunday to deliver a tough message to the nation, calling for political stability as testing anniversaries of anti-government protests approach.

President Yang Shangkun led Communist Party and government leaders into Peking's Great Hall of the People for the annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which acts as their advisory body.

Several octogenarians had to be assisted to their seats on the rostrum and 81-year-old chairman Li Xiannian was helped to his feet for the national anthem.

The conference work report delivered to about 2,000 delegates said their first task was to "preserve and develop political stability and unity."

The move from the camps in

million, and voting is comput-

erized.

Labour currently has 85 seats in the 148-seat House of Representatives, which chooses the government. The Liberal Party has 45 seats and its coalition partner National Party has 18 seats.

In the wings is an apparently large and disenchanted third force — of Australian Democrats, Greens and independent candidates — who appear to be commanding about 20 per cent of the vote, according to the polls.

With a week remaining, public opinion polls are predicting a lose vote along party lines, Hawke's popularity rating notwithstanding.

Latest polls showed 43 per cent of those questioned favouring Labour, for a mere advantage of two percentage points over Peacock's coalition.

Regardless of Saturday's outcome, Australian foreign policy is unlikely to change. The two main parties espouse similar policies and support continued close relations with the United States.

The campaign has been characterised by several newspapers as uneventful.

The Sydney Morning Herald said that as the election looms, it has become increasingly clear that "the two major candidates have the combined charisma of a wet salad sandwich."

Hawke said re-election of his government would put Australia on the right political course for years to come. The former trade union leader had expressed hope of leading Labour into a fifth election before retiring.

Meanwhile, Peacock's campaign has been dismissed by acerbic Federal Treasurer Paul Keating, who noting his last bid for the prime ministership, remarked, "a souffle only rises once."

The tabloid Daily Telegraph of Sydney asked, "excuse us, but has anyone seen the election campaign?"

Against a background of 6.5 per cent unemployment and 18 per cent interest rates the Daily Telegraph commented, "the federal election campaign is drifting on an ocean of apathy because so many Australian families are drowning in a sea of debt and feel they are living in a sinking country."

Hawke called the election in February. He allowed only 36 days for campaigning, three above the minimum requirement of 33, saying, "we would have gone collectively bonkers" if campaigning had gone longer.

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Taiwan opposition holds huge rally

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's fledgling opposition party Sunday hammered home demands for more democratic reform with an anti-government rally in one of the most sacred spots commemorating Nationalist Party rule on the island.

Some 10,000 cheering supporters of the Democratic Progressive Party chanted pro-democracy slogans at Taipei's Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall in an elaborate park built to honour the Nationalist强人 who led his government into exile in Taiwan from China in 1949.

State radio said 10,000 people were gathered in the park, and witnesses said more demonstrators were pouring in for the rally, which was organized to demand direct presidential elections and an end to the nationalist-dominated National Assembly.

Peacock is making his second — and maybe last — bid for the prime ministerial post. He has asked Australians to dump the Labour government in favour of one that "will work" for Australia's poor working people.

Protesters wielding cans of spray paint covered the park's ornamental white gates and walls with multi-coloured graffiti accusing the Nationalists of stalling democratic change.

It was just as I expected," Zong said. "They have to reform on the legitimacy of the current legislature, which rubber stamps party decisions, and draft a new election law. President Jambyn Batmönkh and Prime Minister Dumsagyn Sodnom offered to resign, and the legislature may accept their resignations next week.

But the apparatus of 69 years of Communist rule remains in place. No one has suggested dismantling the dreaded Committee of Public Security, Mongolia's KGB.

It is not clear if old rules, such as the ban on proselytizing outside Mongolia's one remaining Buddhist monastery, still hold.

Nor is it clear if the ousted leaders are really gone. A hot topic among Mongolians was whether they would retain their official salaries.

The new party secretary general, Bombogavyn Ochirbat, said Thursday it was too early to set forth specific reform plans, although he spoke in broad terms of improving economic efficiency. He stressed that Mongolia should remain Socialist.

After seven years in office, the Hawke-led Labour government faces a possible backlash over pocketbook issues despite campaigning on its record of sound